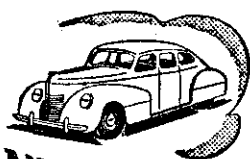


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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Strong Meat

THE first episode of *Hatter's Castle* which I heard from 2ZB on a recent Saturday was sufficiently forceful to rivet me to the microphone for the requisite quarter-of-an-hour. A particularly happy choice, I felt, since the strong pathological flavour should endear it to the sponsors (a patent medicine firm) and the Scottish accents to those listeners who have become accustomed to their dose of Doctor Mac at this hour. On the other hand it would be difficult to find anything that provides more of a contrast to the Pollyannaism of the Doctor Mac chronicles. We are so used to being fed upon serials of family life, firmly rooted in the tradition that in spite of little surface frictions (useful in providing warp and woof for the scriptwriter's loom) Everybody Loves Everybody Underneath, that it is with deliciously guilty enjoyment that we take time off to listen to James Brodie being horribly rude to everybody, and not, mind you, because he is anxious to hide from the world that soft succulent heart of gold beneath. ... Moreover all the characters are drawn with a definiteness reminiscent of the school of painting that draws a thick black line around each object, a definiteness which in the book makes for unreality, but for clarity when these characters must make themselves known to us by aural means alone. (We even heard Grandma supping her tea.) *Hatter's Castle* is Strong Meat, and therefore very suitable for dishing out in easily digested 15-minute portions. You get all the flavour and none of the deleterious after-effects noticed by those who have scoffed the book at a single sitting.

### Short Stories Wanted

THE suitability of the short story for radio reading has been stressed often enough in these columns, but this was brought home again forcibly to me when 4YA presented the NZBS feature *Watch Below*. This story of a young and inexperienced engineer, left alone with a recalcitrant engine in the bowels of his first ship, is a small masterpiece of psychology. The youngster goes on watch a boy and comes off again a man, after his first assumption of real responsibility; and the listener's insight into the mind of the young engineer is due as much to Dermot Cathie's skilled reading as to the story itself. At present, as far as my listening goes, we have only the recorded short stories done by the NZBS, and the work of such yarn-spinners as Tusitala, in the almost inexhaustible field of the short story. I cannot help feeling that there must be dozens of people with good voices and a flair for reading aloud who could contribute to a Short Story Series read directly from local stations. Cannot such excellent readers be prevailed upon to inaugurate a new session of local talent? Short story readings could be used to replace such worn-out favourites as *Dad and Dave*.

### Fleet Street

I LOOK with faint derision now on my hitherto respectfully received daily paper since hearing H. R. G. Jefferson's first talk in the series *The London Popular Press*. Poor foolish desert flower, I think, growing unassailed by

the docks and nettles of stimulating competition for the benefit of a mere



handful—not even an exclusive one—of readers. And then, abandoning the metaphors that the good journalist does not mix, I feel very grateful to Mr. Jefferson for giving us

this enlightening account, in plain facts and figures, of London's daily papers—their nature, their politics, and their public. It gave us a chance, as New Zealanders, to learn something of a Press in comparison with which ours is a pamphlet pre-addressed, "To the Householder." It also gave Mr. Jefferson a chance to make some shrewd comments which in our ignorance we cannot even question. The fact that he chose this particular topic for his opening talk seems to indicate that he has had our poverty and ignorance in this matter brought home to him.

### London Mixture

STATION 2YA's big Saturday night show *The Voice of London* lasted a full hour, and, listening to it was like being given *table d'hôte* (To-day's Special—Curate's Egg) when you would have preferred to order *à la carte*. The programme, in my opinion, laboured under two serious disadvantages—the first the fact that this tour of London's theatreland was somewhat over-conducted (our cicerone was such an enthusiastic young man and introduced his finds with such eulogy on past exploits and present entertainment value that I listened with the wariness of one being sold a pup), and secondly the vociferous presence of a studio audience, which always has the effect of making me, a mere radio listener, feel somewhat de trop, particularly if the studio audience expresses loud appreciation of visual clowning (Stanley Holloway's facial contortions, for example) which I am not in a position to enjoy. However it is possibly churlish to let faults in the service blind you to the merits of the dishes served. Stanley Holloway's story of little Albert swallowing a sovereign was fit to set before a king, and George Robey pulled off a plum with his modern version of "If You Were the Only Girl in the World." Colonel Chinstrap amply upheld the honour of *ITMA*, somewhat compromised by the introductory exhibition of mutual backscratching indulged in by Tommy Handley and the compère. The session ended on a loftier note with Anna Neagle ("The First Lady of the British Screen") in her role of Queen Victoria, commenting at a safe distance on the suitability of the Royal Match, an item which in manner and subject matter could not be further removed from Our Albert, who opened the programme. *The Voice of London* certainly had both quality and variety, but it was a curiously unhomogenous entertainment.

### Words Fail

HOW to describe the indescribable has been the problem of radio announcers during Dunedin's week of centennial festival. Coverage of events happening this year has been excellent; sports fixtures have been relayed with the competent enthusiasm we have come to ex-